

SPECIES RECOVERY TIMELINE - AMERICAN ALLIGATOR (13)



1591, First Drawing of the American Alligator by a Westerner, Theodor de Bry

Source: "Killing Crocodiles" <<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/254215>>.



1791, Such Incredible Numbers, William Bartram

"Alligators feeding in a river in Florida were in such incredible numbers and so close together from shore to shore that it would have been easy to have walked across on their heads."

Source: "Travels through North and South Carolina," Georgia, East and West Florida, William Bartram, 1791. Image: From New York Public Library Digital Collections, Rare Book Division, "Lacertus, The Alligator," Mark Catesby, 1754.



1827, Thousands of the Largest Size Killed, John J. Audubon

"On the Red River (Louisiana), before it was navigated by steam-vessels, they were so extremely abundant, that, to see hundreds at a sight along the shore... was quite a common occurrence... It was on that river, particularly, that thousands of the largest size were killed, when the mania of having either shoes, boots or saddlebags, made of their hides, lasted." It is estimated 3-3.5 million alligators were killed in Louisiana between 1880-1933.

Source: "Observations on the Natural History of the Alligator, In a Letter to Sir William Jardine, Baronet, and Prideaux John Selby, Esq.," John J. Audubon, The Museum of Foreign Literature and Science, Volume 11, 1827. "The alligator's life history," E. A. McIlhenny, Boston, 1935. Image: "Alligator Shooting in the Swamps," Lossing and Barrett, 1854.



1880-1894, 2.5 million Alligator Hides Harvested from the Florida Wilds

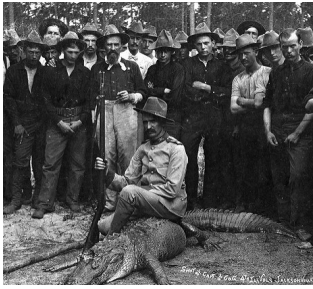
Source: "Alligators and Plume Birds; The Despoilation of Florida's Living Aesthetic" by Jack E. Davis, in Paradise Lost? The Environmental History of Florida, 2005. Image: "Alligator hunter shooting an alligator", 1870s, <<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/31256>>.



1893, Alligator Avenue, Harper's New Monthly Magazine

"Jacksonville is the busiest place in Florida....The main street is fit to be called Alligator Avenue, because of the myriad ways in which that animal is offered as a sacrifice....I saw them stuffed and skinned, turned into bags, or kept in tanks and boxes and cages; their babies made into ornaments or on sale as toys; their claws used as purses, their teeth as jewelry, their eggs as curios....I could not, for the life of me, help thinking of the fate of the buffalo every time I walked that street."

Source: "Our Own Riviera," Julian Ralph, Harper's New Monthly Magazine, Volume 86, Issue 514, March 1893. Image: Crowd at shell store. 1881. Black & white photonegative. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory. Accessed 18 Apr. 2016.<<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/6662>>.



1913, No Audubon Society Espouses His Cause, Forest and Stream

"...and with all his ugliness the Florida alligator bids fair to follow the Florida plume birds...into the limbo of wild species destroyed for commercial purposes. One unfortunate feature of the case is that he alligator has no friends...No Audubon Society espouses his cause...The statistics show that he is going: in fact, from large areas of Florida he has gone."

Source: "The Alligator Satchel," Forest and Stream, Feb. 13, 1913. Image: Alligator shot by the captain of 4th Illinois Volunteers: Jacksonville, Florida, State Library and Archives of Florida, 1898.



1959, Alligator Crossing Published, Marjory Stoneman Douglas

"He'd got no business to go around killing alligators..., Henry thought, especially with lights and with guns that never gave them a chance. It wasn't fair."

Source: "The Alligator Satchel," Forest and Stream, Feb. 13, 1913 Image: Man posing with stuffed alligators. 19--?. Black & white photograph. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory. Accessed 19 Apr. 2016.<<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/158>>.



1962-1971, Hunting of the American Alligator Banned by the Federal Government

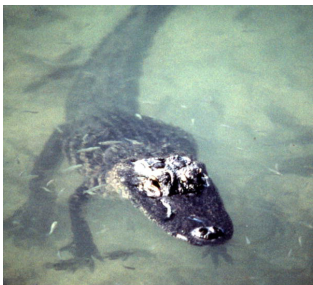
Source: "Alligators and Crocodiles," fws.gov. Image: Gainey, Lou. Unidentified game and fish officers with alligators . 1966. Black & white photoprint. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory. Accessed 19 Apr. 2016.<<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/60554>>.



1964, Experimental Alligator Farm and Captive Breeding Research, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

"Although the first farm in the United States was established in 1891 in Jacksonville, Florida, it was not until 1964 that extensive research was initiated in Louisiana by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries....This program included the design of an experimental alligator farm at Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge that led to the development of methods for artificial incubation of alligator eggs, heated controlled chambers for the culture of juvenile alligators, and breeding pens for adult alligators."

Source: "Captive Breeding of Alligators and Other Corcodilians," Ruth M. Elsey, Ted Joanen, Larry McNease, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Presentated at the IUCN Crocodile Specialist Group Conference, 1993. Image: The New Student's Reference Work, LA2-NSRW-1-0072.



1967, American Alligator Listed as an Endangered Species

Source: "Alligators and Crocodiles," fws.gov. Image: Alligator in the "Blue Hole" pond: Big Pine Key, Florida, State Library and Archives of Florida, October 1982.



1970s-1990s, Success in Louisiana's Alligator Management Program, Brian Piazza

"...I participated in one of the last of those research projects. In it, I looked through stomachs of harvested wild alligators for the aluminum tags that researchers had put on farm-raised alligators that had been collected from the wetlands as eggs, raised and then returned to that habitat....This large body of scientific research on alligator life history, ecology and management culminated in an ecologically sound alligator management program that is used as a model for managing crocodilian species worldwide and one of the most recognized wildlife conservation success stories in the United States." In 1970, the Louisiana alligator population was estimated to be 172,080. By 1993, the number had increased to 992,314.

Source: "Alligator Hunt A Conservation Story," Bryan Piazza, The Nature Conservancy, blog.nature.org, March 5, 2012. "Hunting Alligators," Robert A. Thomas, Property and Environmental Research Center Report, Vol. 17, No. 3, Fall 1999. Image: "American Alligator Babies," Released into Louisiana Marshes, USFWS.



1975, Delisting of the American Alligator in Certain Parts of Louisiana

Source: "The American Alligator and Its Importance to the Florida Everglades," Terence Houston, Ecological Society of America, Jun 4, 2012. Image: Liddle, Thomas E., Jr. Alligator basking in the sun in the Everglades - Everglades, Florida. 196-. Color slide. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory. Accessed 19 Apr. 2016. <<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/13484>>.



1987, American Alligator Pronounced A Fully Recovered Species

The American alligator is removed from the endangered species list after the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service pronounced a complete recovery of the species.

Source: "American Alligator," fws.gov. Image: Buddha Dog / Flickr